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Program Highlights

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Improving Workplace Protections for
NEW WORKERS

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NEW WORKER, HIGH RISK!

If you are new at your job, your risk of injury is much higher than for your more experienced co-workers. In fact, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in 1979, 48% of workers injured had been on the job less than one year.

Why are new workers more likely to be hurt? BLS studies show that employees injured at work often lack one vital tool to protect themselves: information. Take a look at the following data gathered by BLS in various surveys:

-- of 724 workers hurt while using scaffolds, 27% said they received no information on safety requirements for installing the kind of scaffold on which they were injured.

-- of 868 workers who suffered head injuries, 71% said they had no instruction concerning hard hats.

-- of 554 workers hurt while servicing equipment, 61% said they were not informed about lockout procedures.

In nearly every type of injury BLS researchers have studied, the same story is repeated over and over. Workers often do not receive the safety information they need--even on jobs involving dangerous equipment where training is clearly essential. In one BLS study of workers injured while operating power saws, nearly one of every five said no safety training on the equipment had been provided.

This problem deserves immediate attention from both the federal and private sectors. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration wants to work with workers, employers, and vocational schools to increase protections for new employees.

WHAT WORKERS CAN DO

-- Be sure you understand all necessary safety measures before you start to work. If the explanantion is unclear, ask again.

-- Use what you learn--all the time.

-- If respirators or other personal protective equipment are required, wear them consistently and maintain them properly. If guards are required on equipment, make sure they are in place.

-- Don't take short-cuts; follow safety and health instructions to the letter.

-- If you work at a worksite where toxic substances may be in use, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health--OSHA's companion research agency--suggests you ask the following questions:

1) Are any substances used in this plant known to be harmful?

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2) Are trade name products used without full knowledge of what is in them?

3) Does the job require contact with mists, vapors, dusts, gases, or fumes that are potentially harmful?

-- If you need help in finding out whether a chemical can be harmful, call your nearest OSHA area office, NIOSH's Technical Information Branch at (513) 523-8328 or OSHA's Technical Data Center at (202) 523-9700.

WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN DO

-- Make safety training an essential part of plant routine. OSHA standards require safety training for workers in many types of hazardous work. A comprehensive safety training program will assure compliance and can also pay off in reduced absenteeism, lower compensation costs, and increased efficiency.

-- Use the free, penalty-free consultation service available in nearly every state; consultants can help you design an effective safety program.

WHAT OSHA CAN DO

Safety and health experts are available at every state and federal OSHA office to answer questions from workers and employers. Don't know where the closest OSHA office is? Call an OSHA Regional Office listed under "U.S. Labor Department" in phone directories for Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Kansas City, Dallas, Denver, San Francisco, and Seattle. These offices can also refer you to the free on-site consultation service in your area.

-- OSHA Publications and Audiovisual Materials. This catalog is available from the OSHA Publications Office, Room S-4203, Washington, D. C. 20210 ((202) 523-9655). Listings include:

-- Principles and Practices of Occupational Safety and Health
This six-part self-study program is designed to help first-line supervisors to identify and correct workplace hazards. The total cost of the program is $29.25, although each component must be purchased separately from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 ((202) 783-3238).

-- A Resource Guide to Worker Education Materials in Occupational Safety and Health. This 228-page book lists training materials and publications on safety and health available from selected public and private organizations. It costs $7.00 and must be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 ((202) 783-3238).

-- OSHA's Training Institute, 1555 Times Dr., Des Plaines, IL 60018 ((312) 297-4810) offers courses open to the public on safety and health in general industry and in construction. The week-long courses are tuition-free, although participants must register in advance and pay their own travel and expenses. The Training Institute also sponsors regional safety and health training sessions around the country. Call or write to find out about upcoming seminars, course offerings, and openings.

WHAT VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS CAN DO

OSHA has called upon vocational schools to increase awareness of job safety and health among their students who will soon be entering the workforce. The agency has endorsed 45 vocational safety and health training programs developed by and available for purchase from the Center for Occupational Research and Development, 601C Lake Air Dr., Waco, TX 76710 ((817) 772-8756).

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